

>> The 7 LIBERATING ARTS & SCIENCES:

The Trivium - 1] General **Grammar**, 2] Formal **Logic**, 3] Classical **Rhetoric**

The Quadrivium - 1] **Mathematics**, 2] **Geometry**, 3] **Musical Theory**, 4] **Astronomy**

Greetings _____,

It is important that parents familiarize themselves with the 7 Liberating Arts & Sciences - especially the **Trivium**, - before their children are introduced, at age 5 or 6, to the current Western primary and secondary schooling paradigm.

The Trivium comprises the first three of the liberating arts which have to do with **Letter**, Qualities, and Mind.

The subjects of the **Quadrivium** - the second four of the Liberating Arts & Sciences having to do with **Number**, Quantities, and Matter. These subjects are more properly and thoroughly addressed as the pupil reaches the teen aged years.

In human perspective, the total of Reality is Matter and Mind.

The following is a quotation of the last paragraph from: The Lost Tools of Learning [the Trivium Method], an essay written by Dorothy L. Sayers in 1947.

"What use is it to pile task on task and prolong the days of labor, if at the close the chief object is left unattained? It is not the fault of the teachers--they work only too hard already. The combined folly of a civilization that has forgotten its own roots is forcing them to shore up the tottering weight of an educational structure that is built upon sand. They are doing for their pupils the work which the pupils themselves ought to do. **For the sole true end of education is simply this: to teach men how to learn for themselves; and whatever instruction fails to do this is effort spent in vain.**"

Follow the URL below to read or to download the entire text.

<http://www.gbt.org/text/sayers.html>

Use the ideas presented in this short essay as the baseline for the education of yourselves as parents, as well as for your child. Re-read this essay, and other material to be presented, in spaced repetition over time; new insights will continue to become apparent through each successive reading. To paraphrase and expand on parts of Ms. Sayers' last quoted sentence, the object is to teach people to learn for themselves so that they may develop

the one faculty of mind - among several - which they *CAN* develop systematically; their rational faculty.

Rational (provisional meaning) - the mental capacity to perceive, understand, and use *ratios*; and to use all of the skills and abilities subsumed under that capacity (like using organized language, formalized mathematics, and developing philosophy & cosmology -- for example).

Make an attempt to understand the following stages of each person's development as reflected by the maturing neural development of the human brain in four distinct phases.

1] Ages 1 to 11 - the right and left hemispheres of the brain are connected by a tissue called the corpus callosum. In a manner of saying, the brain hemispheres are wired in series and operate as a single entity. Due to this fact, children naturally have very good abilities of memorization with which to assimilate languages, simple chains of connected facts, imaginative stories, and limited arithmetic skills like the meanings of numbers (word search - arithmology), as well as the primary functions of counting, combining (adding), and taking away (subtracting) numbers. They can also relate number to simple plane geometrical forms (which are cognitively intuitive) in a rudimentary fashion that also plays into their facility with the subject of geography.

However, be very careful not to push mathematical skills before age 11. Kids can 'memorize' *multiplication tables* at an early age if they are interested, but do not ask them to perform multiplication or division *computations* until they are about 11. While the ability is still fresh and fun, they can even commit to memory the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements in the latter stage of their childhood years with only a tenuous understanding as to what the elements and the discipline of chemistry are all about. It is fine if a child starts to learn some of these topic *on one's own*; that is, if he/she begins the internal dialog mentioned in the next section, section #2, earlier than normally expected . . . the point is, do not overtly encourage pursuit of these complex subjects in children who have not yet reached the 11 year age plateau.

This is the *Grammar* stage of absorbing data which interests the children.

Unlike *information*, data need not be thoroughly understood. Much of the data that is absorbed before age 11 becomes the material to be understood as *information* during a person's adolescence and young adulthood. Give the child the freedom to explore his/her interest with unbounded curiosity during this period. Allow the elementary beginnings of music, dance, and the visual and literary arts to take root. Thus, the mind will begin to be opened and the act of learning will remain a life-long pleasure and adventure to that person.

2] At the onset of puberty, at approximately age 11, the corpus callosum begins to resorb. This allows the two hemispheres of the brain to start operating more autonomously, but still as being wired in parallel, so to speak. The left hemisphere is more linear, analytic, and scientific in its operation; whereas, the right one is more holistic, synthetic, and

artistic. The quality of *intellectual understanding* begins to come into a person's life through these processes of analysis (taking ideas apart) and synthesis (putting ideas together, or generalizing). The data obtained in childhood, as well as that encountered on a continuing basis, is converted into information by one hemisphere holding that data in mind while the opposite hemisphere performs its analysis (left side) or synthesis (right side) for more complete understanding through the systematic elimination of stated contradictions. This partial bifurcation of the two brain hemispheres is what allows one to perform an internal dialog; an internal conversation, if you will, which promotes more complex thinking tasks to bring about that understanding. The **solo question-and-answer feature** of human cognition is the crucial stage of physiological and psychological development which those who would arrange the societies of the world into castes - workers, soldiers, administrative drones, and so called nobility - are trying desperately to arrest.

By the way, the ostensibly termed secondary level subjects of more progressed mathematics (algebra & formal geometry), logic, literary and historical analyses, creative writing, formalized science and other topics which are considered advanced, can be comprehended comparatively swiftly when presented at the proper time. That time would be to post pubescent teenagers who can often assimilate the basis of these topics in only a month or two rather than the multiple semesters and, in some cases, years spent forcing these subjects in primary schools on pre pubescent children. I use the term "force" because the idea in government schools is **not** to teach these ideas in the spirit of education, but to convince students at every age level that they are simply not smart enough to ingest these subjects; that is, to make them lose interest in the various topics established by the common ancestors of us all. Stated bluntly, the goal of the structures-of-power is to domesticate people, not to educate them.

Complex operations which require multiple mental steps to perform like mathematical chain addition and subtraction (multiplication & division) and other, more advanced elements of math, as well as the language based logical functions (analysis, synthesis, & term definition) are now within the proper grasp of the adolescent.

The beginning of this stage of understanding is, of course, the *Logic* level of development.

3] The *Rhetoric* level can often run concurrently to the logic level. Depending on the individual, original literary and/or mathematical compositions which communicate the student's knowledge and understanding may be expressed only a short time after that general understanding brought about by logic is evident. Some individuals display deep understanding as early as age 12 to 13; others, no later than 15 to 17. In having become conversant with Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric, these individuals, who are now on the cusp of adulthood, are comprehensively prepared to live a self-determined, fully satisfying life of continued learning and accomplishment.

The final stage of adolescence is usually marked at age 21 when skeletal bone growth normally ceases, the general body chemistry converts from being predominantly acidic to that of alkalinity, and the third molars (wisdom teeth) erupt. The adult is now fully

positioned in the physical sense. The next major physical body and brain change does not occur until the mid to late age 50's.

4] The *Mature* level: What Carl Jung described in mostly psychological terms about this age 50+ maturing state, but which has a related physiological cause, he called the Anima/Animus. This phenomenon takes place as the testosterone levels in males (Anima in men), and the estrogen levels in females (Animus in women) begin to decrease. Due to this physical change, the mind now starts to make profound connections of events which have taken place over an entire lifetime. This is a corollary occurrence of bringing greater understanding in the adolescent years of what was mentally held as data in childhood. If a person has been fortunate enough to be trained and practiced in the Trivium, these processes of integration are viewed as deeply important personal accomplishments in themselves. That is, an adult truly *Grows Up* as he/she grows older. An enlightened comprehension of not only one's individual and family life is experienced, but an appreciation for the life of man as a species and his place in the universe is glimpsed. One's life is perceived as having come full circle. It is an unexpected, ineffable, and astounding experience! _____

Unfortunately, the Trivium is not currently presented as a value unto itself. It has been co-opted by various religious and philosophic groups as a means to propagate their own dogma and to advance their specialized agendas. However, it is still possible to judiciously sever the various items of propaganda from the principles of Knowledge (general grammar), Understanding (Aristotelian logic), and Wisdom (formal rhetoric) from these, otherwise, excellent presentations.

I recommend you start with the book Teaching the Trivium by Harvey Bluedorn. The Bluedorn family has a website titled Trivium Pursuit which is a great source for other classical teaching aids as well. Simply follow their recommendations for the methods of presenting children, and their parents, the various general educational materials and try to minimize their fundamentalist religious preaching if this view conflicts with your personal or family values.

There are at least three very informative audio lectures, in the form of podcasts, at the Bluedorn's web site - www.triviumpursuit.com . The podcasts are titled: "Teaching the Trivium" #1 & #2, and "The Bare Bones Basics of Debate".

Another source is the book A Well Trained Mind by Susan Wise Bauer. This book outlines a Classical primary and secondary curriculum.

I suggest you take several weeks to explore these sources and ideas, and then contact me for my more comprehensive sources and bibliography for the liberating arts at the following email address:

534trivium@gmail.com

I think you will find that as you start to pursue your child's education, as well as your own, that the many worlds of information on true education will make themselves apparent to you and your family.

In closing, a note is needed here regarding the concept of human domestication, which was earlier mentioned. A non-rational wild animal can be trained to domestication by man to co-exist peacefully with humans. The opposite of being a domesticated animal is to be a wild animal. Because the essence of man is to be a volitionally rational animal, the opposite of a domesticated man is not a *wild man* -- but an educated man. In antiquity this man was simply called a wise person. An educated person (a wise person) is one who can thoroughly and critically investigate *ANY* idea or topic without necessarily, or blindly, embracing it. An educated person, in other words, is possessed of high levels of intellectual judgment (to find meaning) and of value judgment (to find relative value, or to accurately evaluate) with which to advantageously discern the critical elements of propositions, arguments, and general topics that arise in life-situations. These judicious powers arise from learning and practicing the Trivium as well as the extended Liberal Arts and Sciences. The state of being educated (or wise) is the natural state of being human.

Best wishes,

Gene

